

# PRESS RELEASE

## House Armed Services Committee Bob Stump, Chairman

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### OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BOB STUMP POSTURE HEARING ON FY 2003 DEFENSE BUDGET

Today, the committee meets to receive testimony on the Administration's defense budget request for fiscal year 2003. It is with great pleasure that we welcome back Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and UnderSecretary Zakheim and also General Richard Myers, who will be testifying before the committee for the first time as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Before proceeding, I want to take a few moments to recognize the Honorable Colin Kenny, Chairman of the Committee on National Security and Defense of the Canadian Senate along with 7 of his colleagues from the committee. A number of us met with Chairman Kenny and his colleagues earlier this morning and had a very productive and pleasant exchange on the state of our special security relationship. I invited Chairman Kenny and his delegation to sit in on this hearing, but I understand they will have to depart shortly due to other pressing engagements.

Thank you once again for taking the time to visit with us and we wish you well during your remaining visit to our nation.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to welcome the two newest members of the committee, Jeff Miller from Florida and Joe Wilson from South Carolina.

Jeff Miller was elected to the House last October to fill the seat left vacant by Rep. Joe Scarborough. Jeff came to Congress from the Florida Legislature where he served as Chairman of the Utilities & Telecommunications Committee. Jeff has a strong interest in military matters, which coincides with the considerable military presence in Florida's 1st District.

Our most recent addition is Joe Wilson who was recently elected to fill the seat left vacant by the untimely death of our friend and former Chairman, Floyd Spence. Joe comes to us after a lengthy career in the South Carolina State Senate where he last served as Chairman of the Transportation Committee. Joe also served in the Army Reserve and is currently a Colonel in the South Carolina National Guard serving as a Staff Judge Advocate. Joe's family is also following in their father's footsteps with sons in the National Guard, in the Navy and in the Army ROTC.

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Welcome to the both of you and we look forward to putting you to work in the days ahead.

Mr. Secretary, we have a lot of ground to cover today and I am sure every one of our 60 members will want the opportunity to engage with you, so we better get started. I will therefore dispense with a lengthy opening statement and make only a couple of quick points.

First, while we are here today to discuss the budget, the context for today's hearing and the debate to follow has to be the war on terrorism and the goals and objectives laid out by the Administration for winning it. While it may seem fairly obvious to most of us in this room, I fear that the nation in general is struggling to grasp the enormity and significance of what this war means for the nation and customary debate over national priorities.

I personally believe that the President has established the proper balance and necessary vision for the nation to effectively pursue this difficult task. However, our challenge as policy makers will be to resist the impulse to resort to business as usual due to the long-term and unconventional nature of this conflict.

With this in mind, I commend and congratulate the President and Secretary Rumsfeld for putting forward a budget proposal that properly recognizes that the overriding priority facing our nation and thus our government is to provide for our national security.

We can and we will debate over whether this is precisely the right number and whether the right tradeoffs were made within the proposed budget. However, there should be no question that we collectively have a duty to ensure that during this time of crisis, we are providing the President and our men and women in uniform with the necessary tools and resources to defeat the scourge of terrorism across the globe.

Finally, this budget also starts to give shape to a new strategic approach to providing for national security. While the impulse is to analyze the adequacy of budgets by comparing spending patterns, this war should demonstrate that it will not always be the big ticket, high profile investments that win the day. We need a flexible and capable force across the entire spectrum of conflict and I believe we have started down a very productive path in that direction.

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